THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) In keeping with our policy to promote people-to-people contacts and greater interaction among scholars, intellectuals, writers, artists, businessmen and others, Government unilaterally eased issuance of visas to Pakistani nationals by taking the following decisions:

(i) the maximum number of places to which Pakistani nationals can travel during a visit to India has been increased from 8 to 12.

(ii) grant of one-year visas to eligible Pakistani businessmen whenever necessary, with a provision for different checkpoints for entry into and exit from India;

(iii) international airport at Chennai has been designated as an additional checkpoint for the arrival and departure of Pakistani nationals in addition to Delhi and Mumbai airports and the Attari railhead;

(iv) grant of exempt from police reporting (EPR) visas as far as possible to, inter alia, artists, journalists, students, businessmen, senior citizens and children;

(v) visa fees for, inter alia, senior citizens, artists, students and journalists have been waived;

(vi) provision to grant visas to elegible reputed Pakistani artists with the permission to give commercial performances;

(b) Government are not aware of any specific steps taken by Pakistan regarding its visa policy for Indian nationals.

Discussion for Revival of Nuclear Cooperation between India and USA

199. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any discussion has been held between India and USA regarding revival of nuclear cooperation for peaceful uses which has been suspended since 1974 following explosion of nuclear device by India;

(b) if so, the details of discussions held; and

(c) the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) to (c) India and the United States have been engaged in a wide-ranging dialogue on bilateral, regional and global issues intended to broaden and deepen our mutually beneficial relations and identify areas of cooperation. Cooperation in some areas of science and technology including nuclear power generation have been discussed in a preliminary way as part of this wide-ranging dialogue.

Summoning of Indian Diplomat by Chinese Foreign Office

200. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a senior Indian diplomat in Beijing was summoned by the Chinese foreign office twice on the recent statement of the Indian Defence Minister on China;

(b) if so, whether China has lodged a formal protest; and

(c) the details of the events leading to the Chinese protest and the diplomatic initiatives taken to explain the correct Indian position?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE):

(a) to (c) During April-May, 1998, the Raksha Mantri had referred to China's military capabilities and potential, and reports concerning to China-Myanmar defence co-operation.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry conveyed to our Embassy officials in Beijing on April 16, 1998 and on May 6, 1998 that there had been improvement in Sino-Indian relations in recent years. They said that references in regard to China-